against hoarders and black marketeers under the Essential Commodities Act, 1955 and Prevention of Black Marketing and Maintenance of Supplies of Essential Commodities Act, etc.

(v) Government have decided to import upto 2.00 million tonnes of wheat during 1996-97 to augment domestic availability of foodgrains.

**World Environment Congress**

2623. SHRI SATYAJITSINH DULIPSINH GAEKWAD : Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state :

(a) whether attention of the Government has been drawn to the deliberations of the Fifth World Environment Congress held in New Delhi in December, 1996;

(b) whether it has been observed in the Congress that in most of the cities the banks of Ganga are without the sewage treatment plants;

(c) if so, the steps contemplated to make sewage treatment arrangements for such cities;

(d) the other main observations and suggestions made therein for containing and curbing the pollution in the Indian cities and rivers; and

(e) the reaction of the Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (PROF. SAIFUDDIN SOZ) : (a) No information is available with Government on the Fifth World Environment Congress held in New Delhi in December, 1996.

(b) to (e) Does not arise. However, under the Ganga Action Plan and the National River Conservation Plan Pollution abatement works which include sewage treatment arrangements in most of the places have been sanctioned for 156 towns.

*[Translation]*

**Effect of Insecticides**

2624. SHRI JAYSINH CHAUHAN : Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) whether spraying of insecticides have been adversely affecting health of the farmers and labourers;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the estimated loss of human life and the disease caused due to use of the pesticides during one year in the world as per the report of the World Health Organisation; and

(d) the steps taken or proposed to be taken by the Government to solve this problem?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (EXCLUDING THE DEPARTMENT OF ANIMAL HUSBANDRY AND DAIRYING) (SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA) : (a) and (b) The use of registered insecticides as per prescribed practices do not affect the health of the farmers and labourers. However, insecticides being toxic in nature, may pose health hazards if used indiscriminately or injudiciously.

(c) Models and informal estimates based on hospitalisation data and population surveys (WHO:1986) suggest that annual incidence of cases of unintentional acute poisoning with severe manifestations probably exceed one million, with case fatality rate of 0.4-1.9%.

(d) The following steps have been taken by the Government :-

(i) The Registration Committee set up under the insecticides Act, 1968 registers pesticides only after evaluating their safety and efficacy;

(ii) The labels and leaflets which invariably accompany the pesticides containers give directions on the usage, safety measures to be observed, first-aid measures and antidotes to be used in case of accidental poisoning.

(iii) Extension functionaries impart training to farmers and other users on various aspects of pesticides handling and usage including precautions required to be observed;

(iv) The Government is popularising Integrated Pest Management (IPM) technology which envisages cultural, mechanical and biological methods of pest control and only need-based judicious use of pesticides.

*[English]*

**Promotion of Marine Fishing**

2625. SHRI K.P. SINGH DEO : Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) whether there is a vast scope for promoting the marine fishing in Orissa;

(b) if so, the steps taken in the Eighth Five Year Plan to assist the State Government of Orissa in increasing the marine fishing;

(c) whether Government have drawn up schemes for the promotion of marine fishing in the Ninth Five Year Plan for the coastal States; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (EXCLUDING THE DEPARTMENT OF ANIMAL HUSBANDRY AND DAIRYING) (SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA) : (a) and (b) The harvestable potential of marine fisheries resources of Orissa has been estimated at 1.44 lakh tonnes. The State during the years 1993-94, 1994-95 and 1995-96 harvested 1.04, 1.22 and 1.23 lakh tonnes respectively from the marine sector. Thus, there is some scope for promoting marine fishing in the State.

Besides the Schemes under the State Plan, the Department of Agriculture and Cooperation is implementing

the following Centrally Sponsored Schemes during the Eighth Plan to promote marine fishing:-

(i) Development of coastal marine fisheries comprising the components viz. (a) Motorisation of Traditional Craft Introduction of Plywood Craft and (c) Introduction of intermediate type of craft for offshore pelagic fishing.

(ii) Reimbursement of Central Excise Duty on HSD oil supplied to mechanised fishing vessels below 20 metre length.

(iii) Enforcement of Marine Fishing Regulation Act and Introduction of Artificial Reefs and Sea Farming Project.

(iv) Scheme for development of Fishery Harbours (major and minor ports) and Fish Landing Centres.

(v) Development of model fishermen villages, group accident insurance and savings-cum-relief under the scheme on 'National Welfare if Fishermen'.

(c) and (d) Ninth Plan Schemes have not yet been finalised.

**Open Market Quota of Sugar**

2626. SHRI R. SAMBASIVA RAO : Will the Minister of FOOD be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government of Andhra Pradesh has urged the Union Government to issue orders allowing the sugar factories to raise their open market sales in view of the bad fiscal position of the sugar industry in the State;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the reaction of the Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV) : (a) and (b) In Februady, 1997 a request was received from the Government of Andhra Pradesh for release of additional free sale sugar to six cooperative sugar mills of the State identified by the High Level Restructuring Committee appointed by the Government of Andhra Pradesh to improve the financial position of these sugar mills. Besides, it was also requested that free sale sugar release may be increased in case of five units of Public Sector Company Nizam Sugars Ltd. so as to liquidate the cane price arrears to the cane growers as the Company was facing severe liquidity crunch.

(c) The Government have set up a Committee in the Ministry of Food, to consider such requests with specific guidelines and based on its recommendations, the release orders for additional quantities were issued to three units of cooperative sector and all the five units of Public sector in the month of February, 1997. Since the remaining three units of Cooperative sector had already been allowed additional quantities within a period of three months they did not qualify for further release in the month of February, 1997 in view of the above guidelines.

**Wheat Stock in States**

2627. SHRI SULTAN SALAHUDDIN OWAISI : Will the Minister of FOOD be pleased to state :

(a) whether the failure of FCI to send the wheat from the Northern States to the wheat deficient areas is a major factor in its current scarcity;

(b) whether the nation has been forced to take recourse to the imports to combat the soaring prices of wheat whereas a little less than half of the nation's wheat stocks are lying in the States of Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh;

(c) whether 30% of the country's total wheat stocks are still held up in Punjab, where the same has to be stored in the open for the lack of storage space;

(d) whether the Government have conducted any inquiry on the failure of the Food Corporation of India to send wheat to the deficient States;

(e) if so; the outcome thereof; and

(f) the steps being taken by the Government in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV) : (a) to (c) In the current year, wheat despatches exNorth during April' 96 to February' 97 have been 40% higher as compared to April, 95 to February, 96. The decision to import wheat was taken not on account of hold up of wheat stocks in Punjab, Haryana and U.P., but to augment the overall stocks, which had become inadequate due to less production and consequent lesser procurement in the Rabi season of 1996. Presently, approximately 23% of country's total present wheat/stocks are available in Punjab and their storage in open is not for lack of storage space but for transit movement and use of covered space for rice.

(d) to (f) Since there was no failure in sending wheat to the deficit States. these questions do not arise.

**Indian Evidence Act, 1972**

2628. SHRI BHAKTA CHARAN DAS : Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether there is any proposal to amend the Indian Evidence Act, 1972;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Government propose to enact a new legislation regarding the custodial torture and provision of financial relief to the victims; and

(d) if so, the detials thereof?